

ASPR NEWSLETTER

ASPR

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RECEPTION FOR INGO SWANN

Number 14—Summer 1972

A showing of seven paintings by Ingo Swann, "Expanded Awareness in Art," was featured in a reception at the ASPR on April 26. Mr. Swann is participating extensively in ASPR experimentation on out-of-body states. The gathering provided members with an opportunity to relate visually to his subjective experience of out-of-body travel, and to hear about the scientific study of this aspect of parapsychology.

When Mr. Swann became involved with psychical research he discovered what for him is a new painting style. His pictures convey his experience of expanded consciousness. "Aft-Ship's View of Sagittarius," for example, reproduces on canvas, so that viewers may get a feeling of it, his awareness of the cosmos during his out-of-body states. More than 300 people were present at the event, which was made possible by the invaluable help of ASPR members: Mrs. Ruth Brod, Mrs. Judy Skutch, Mrs. Rita Livingston, Mrs. Lucille Kahn, Mrs. Sandra Ohrstrom, and of the administrative staff. Included in the program was a tour of the laboratory. Demonstrations were conducted on the ESPateacher and the Polygraph; Dr. Osis gave an informal talk on visual perception and on the current research.

OUT-OF-BODY EXPERIENCES

Comments by Ingo Swann

What is the import of out-of-body experiences? What do they imply about reality?

Captain Edgar Mitchell, the astronaut, recently said (at the Annual Convention of the American Psychiatric Association), "... In contemporary thought, we are directing scientific effort and resources increasingly toward the understanding of life processes and beyond that, to the understanding of behavior and then consciousness." This is a truly revolutionary idea.

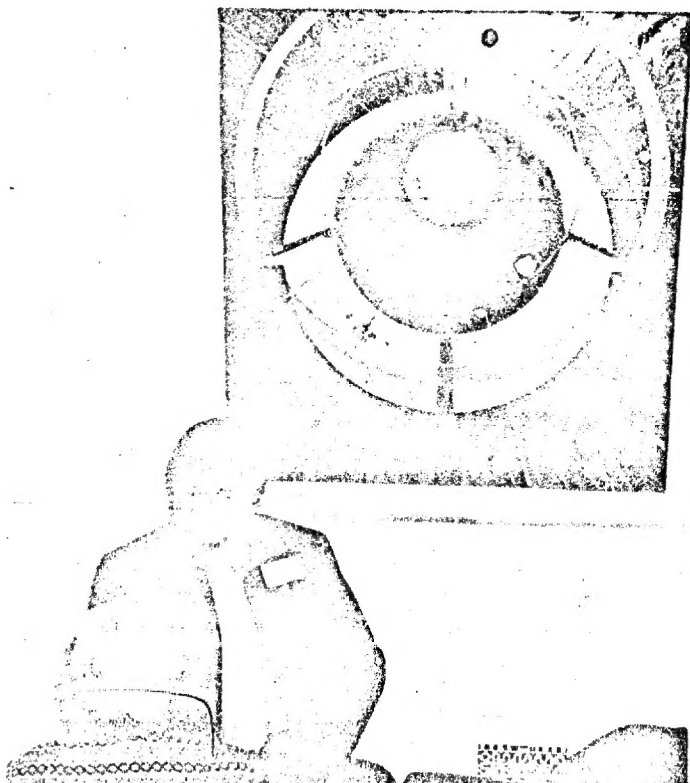
It may be premature to try to establish a definition of the OOB ability, and I find that there are enormous difficulties in developing even a working premise to cover all the phenomena associated with it. But enough has now been established to justify increased efforts toward understanding it. It is one of the most widespread of the psychic phenomena.

As I have developed my own ability to "exteriorize," the

AT RECEPTION FOR INGO SWANN

← Mr. Swann and "The Supremacy of Consciousness Number One"

↓ Guests; Dr. John Wingate (Trustee) and the artist



experience has begun to reveal itself cogently as one of the most astonishing potentialities of man. By using my powers, I have found that the old superstitions and book legends which surround the experience fall away, till OOB begins to appear as a primary "life process," as a behavioral concept. Becoming aware of greater and greater magnitudes of complexity, I have felt the need to

set up for myself metaphysical and ethical standard. I have also found increasing social awareness of these phenomena and their implications. The ASPR deserves all possible support as it pushes ahead in the fascinating realm of OOB—one of the most meaningful of the life processes.

NEW ASPR RESEARCH ON OUT-OF-THE-BODY EXPERIENCES

Karlis Osis, Ph.D.—Director of Research, ASPR

In the current research on out-of-body experiences (part of the program undertaken within the scope of the expected James Kidd legacy), our central hypothesis is that a human being has an ecsomatic aspect, capable of operating independently of and away from the physical body. This part of the personality may also be conceived of as leaving the body at death and continuing to exist. We want to combine all our information from OOB, apparition cases and deathbed-observation experiences, to see whether this ecsomatic-existence hypothesis is strengthened by our new data and its theoretical integration. If the hypothesis indeed proves justified (in opposition to the counter-hypothesis that OOB consists only of ESP coupled with fantasies of traveling) we expect to arrive at something like Myers' concept of a phantasmogenic center which operates outside the body. This concept assumes that the center of the projection is capable of perceiving from the point of view of the location in space to which it has projected itself—rather than from the subject's actual eye-level.

We have now contacted over 100 individuals who responded to our appeals for participants. Out-of-town subjects were invited to project themselves to my office and try to identify target objects arranged on a coffee table there. Several people obtained very encouraging results.

Our major subject to date has been Ingo Swann, with whom Janet Mitchell has conducted exploratory sessions. The general procedure has been as follows: Mr. Swann sits quietly in a semi-dark experimental room, attached to a polygraph (in an adjoining room) which records data concerning his physiological state, i.e., brain waves (EEG), heart rate, respiration, etc. The targets are on a shelf suspended two feet from the ceiling of the experimental room. This shelf is divided by a partition, on each side of which is a tray containing an arrangement of target objects, placed so as to look distinctively different as seen, say, from the south or from the north. We used objects having strong form and color, e.g., an umbrella, a black leather scissors-case, an apple. We asked Mr. Swann to tell us the position from which he saw the objects. He gave us verbal descriptions of the targets, as well as sketches. We developed psychological scales for rating the quality and clarity (as subjectively described) of his OOB vision, which varied from time to time. The results were evaluated by blind judging: that is, a psychologist was asked to match up Mr. Swann's responses without knowing which target they were meant for. She

matched all the 8 sessions (the likelihood of getting 8 out of 8 by chance is 1 in approximately 40,000).

Perception: Ingo Swann sometimes (though not always) was able to give very clear identifications, e.g., the shape of a black leather case on a red background, or a blue cross. His OOB perception was organized in much the same way as if he were indeed looking at the stimulus shelf from the point where he felt he had projected his spiritual self. So OOB vision seems in one respect at least to be more like normal vision than does ESP. Whereas the ESP processes mostly elude conscious awareness, OOB vision appears to be directly observable. For instance Mr. Swann was keenly aware of the lighting conditions in the stimulus area.

Does OOB vision follow the laws of *optics*? On the high shelf we arranged stimulus material (for example a small letter "d") inside a closed box with a small opening and a two-mirror system. We wanted to see whether in the OOB state Mr. Swann could see the target through the opening, as he would normally see it from that point (as reflected via the mirror), or whether he would see it directly by clairvoyance, without using the mirrored image. On the basis of our preliminary results, we are now developing sophisticated optical systems for testing the ecsomatic hypothesis of OOB. Several physicists, engineers and psychologists are enthusiastically cooperating. (See page 4 for names.)

Physiology: What is happening to Ingo Swann's body at the times when he feels his spiritual self to be somewhere else? We have accumulated a considerable mass of physiological records, now in process of analysis. The autonomic nervous system responses seem quite within normal range, indicating that there is no danger to the organism during OOB states. Mr. Swann was also given biofeedback training for the slower brain-wave frequencies (alpha and theta). He identified these states and after a while could reproduce them at will. Until our analysis is complete, we can say nothing definite about brain-wave activity during the OOB, but the voltage changes do appear to be important.

As this project continues, members can give us invaluable help by reporting names of persons who can go into the OOB state at will. We need new talent, and there ought to be plenty of it in a population of 200 million Americans.



Dr. William Gardner and Miss Frances Kish

AT ANNUAL MEETING:

TRUSTEES AND VOTING MEMBERS



*Mr. Michael Knudsen, Dr. Gertrude Schmeidler (Trustee)
and Dr. Genevieve McEldowney*

VOTING MEMBER COMMITTEE FORMED

With the approval of the Officers and Trustees, a Committee of Voting Members of the ASPR was formed early in 1972, with Frances Kish as chairman. A number of meetings have been held to date.

Voting Members are elected by the Board of Trustees to serve three-year terms. They have the important task of voting on the election of the Trustees at the Annual Meeting.

The Voting Member Committee is engaged in exploring new ways of developing and implementing the role of the Voting Members so as to help them take a more active part in the affairs of the Society. It will keep in year-round touch with all Voting Members, advise them of new developments or changes in the policy of the ASPR, and correlate ideas and recommendations for direct transmittal to the Board. It is believed that these changes will be mutually helpful to Board, Voting Members and all the ASPR membership.

Letter from a Student

A student recently wrote to Dr. Gertrude Schmeidler: "I'm excited and pleased to tell you that thanks to your help and tips from some of your colleagues I was able to convince a friend/teacher in our psych department to sponsor me in an independent research project (my senior seminar) in a critical evaluation of the research currently in progress in parapsychology. It will be quite an arduous venture, but I'm very excited to have her guidance in investigating the area, and be able to do it within my academic structure. This way I get credit and have the time to do a thorough job..."

—Felice Weiner, '72

State University of New York
at Albany

To Students and Teachers:

The Education Department of the ASPR has an ongoing file of courses and other opportunities for serious study of parapsychology. (Copies of the current course list are available through this department, on receipt of a stamped 16-cent self-addressed #10 [9½ x 4] envelope.) Do you know of any course now being given, especially at the graduate or college level? If so, will you send us information about it: college, instructor's name, department? Is academic credit given? Will the instructor supervise individual reading or research projects? Are there apprenticeships, workshops? Can you provide other information?

We want to make the NEWSLETTER as useful as possible to you. Several recent articles have reported on teacher and student interests (for instance, "Hints to Aspiring Parapsychologists," in #12, and "Educators Discuss Resources and Needs," in #13). Other articles cover current research, in simple language with a few lead-out references. Have you found these valuable? Do you have ideas for other such articles? Write to Mrs. Nester, Director of Education, ASPR. We welcome your ideas.

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AFFILIATION WITH THE ASPR

As a result of frequent inquiries, the ASPR has decided to consider requests, from societies and similar groups, for formal affiliation with it. The organization applying must have as its primary purpose the study of paranormal phenomena; have 25 or more members, and meet certain other requirements. The ASPR will permit use of its name by the affiliate, and provide several special services. Application will not, of course, assure acceptance. The Trustees will consider each request on its merits.

Write to the Executive Secretary, ASPR, for additional information.

Members who have generously donated their time and advice for the Out-of-Body Research:

Physicists: Mr. L. F. Barcus, Mr. Thomas Etter, Mr. Robert J. Kleehammer, Mr. James Merewether.

Psychologists: Miss Bonnie Preskari, Dr. Carole K. Silfen.

Engineers: Mr. Kenneth Cohen, Mr. Martin Ruderfer, Mr. G. M. Smith.

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FIRST CLASS MAIL

PARAPSYCHOLOGY AND PSYCHIATRY

"PARAPSIKOLOGIA E PSICHIATRIA"

at the University of Modena

At its annual convention last May in Dallas, the American Psychiatric Association sponsored a formal symposium on psychical research, generating considerable response among professionals and laymen. The program, "Science and Psi: Transcultural Trends," was coordinated by Dr. Stanley Dean, a member of the APA's Task Force on Transcultural Psychiatry. He spoke on "Cosmic Consciousness." Other speakers were: Dr. Jan Ehrenwald ("A Neurophysiological Model of Psi Phenomena"); W. G. Bod ("Psychical Research in the 1970's"); Dr. Jule Eisenbud ("Research in Precognition"); and Dr. B. E. Schwarz ("Telepathy and Humor"). The chief discussant was Capt. Edgar Mitchell, NASA astronaut, whose subject was "Awareness in Science." Prof. Howard Rome moderated. This symposium, Dr. Dean reports, has been widely reported in the media.

A Symposium on Parapsychology and Psychiatry was held in September 1971 at the University of Modena, Italy, sponsored by the Italian Society of Psychiatry. This was parapsychology's first official entry into an Italian university.

Speakers included Drs. Piero Cassoli and Emilio Servadio, well-known members of the Parapsychological Association (international organization of professional psychical researchers).

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